



Congressman Donald Payne

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Payne Asks Mogadishu: Another Darfur in the Making?

Congressman Donald M. Payne, Chairman of the Subcommittee on African and Global Health, recently commented on the crisis in Mogadishu, Somalia, "Innocent civilians in Mogadishu are being killed and maimed by Ethiopian security forces and the militia of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG). The atrocities being committed against innocent civilians in Mogadishu are war crimes and crimes against humanity. It is shameful and criminal to use tanks and heavy artillery against civilians.

Mogadishu is another Darfur in the making. It is sad to see that no one seems to care about the untold suffering of the helpless in Somalia. Unfortunately and sadly, the people of Mogadishu are not even allowed to bury their dead relatives and neighbors. We must not turn a blind eye to the suffering of innocent civilians.

Since the Ethiopian invasion of Somalia, thousands of civilians have been killed and maimed and more than 320,000 people have been forced to flee their homes. The abuses that are being carried out by the TFG and the Ethiopian security forces are worse than during the dreadful days of the warlords. Instead of working towards peace and reconciliation, the TFG and the Ethiopian forces are engaged in collective punishment of innocent civilians.

In Darfur, despite the failure to end the genocide, the international community continues to speak out against the suffering forcefully. Unfortunately, the people of Somalia continue to suffer while the international community turns the other way.

It is critical that the African Union expedite the deployment of the proposed peacekeeping force in Somalia. The presence of Ethiopian troops is the single major source of the violence in Mogadishu. Ethiopia must withdraw from Somalia and allow the deployment of a peacekeeping force."

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